



Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project

What is the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project?

Launched in 2010, The Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project (KHCP) is part of the U.S. Government's "Feed the Future" initiative. The project aims to improve food security and nutrition, and raise incomes for over 200,000 smallholder farmers by helping them grow more and better quality fruits, vegetables, and flowers; increase the processing of horticultural produce; link small-scale farmers with local and export markets; and improve the agricultural policy environment. The project has prioritized the strengthening of value chains within eight critical crops: sweet potato, Irish potato, passion fruit, mango, banana, pigeon pea, smallholder flowers, and local market and export vegetables.

Photo: Fintrac, Inc.



Veronica Kalondu displays her harvest of yellow passion fruit in Shimba Hills, Kwale County. She has embraced the trellising technology on her farm and has seen her yields more than triple.

Project Duration and Budget

May 2010 – February 2015
\$32.5 million

Who implements the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project?

Fintrac, Inc.

www.fintrac.com

The program works in partnership with 33 Kenyan public and private sector organizations, including the Government of Kenya, to deliver technical and marketing services.

Where does the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project work?

KHCP works in the Feed the Future targeted high rainfall

and semi-arid Coast, Nyanza, Rift Valley, Eastern, Western and Central provinces

What does Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project do?

Enhances productivity

KHCP links small-scale farmers to input suppliers for improved and certified seeds and other planting materials. It assists farmers with testing of soil and water, and water harvesting. It creates demonstration farms and provides training in crop production and modern farm management to increase productivity.

Increases processing

KHCP assists farmers to upgrade produce quality, introduce new products, and add value to products before marketing in order to maximize income. Interventions include educating farmers about grading and standardizing, processing, packaging, branding, postharvest handling, and risk mitigation.

Improves marketing and trade

The project market data to stakeholders in the horticulture industry and closely monitors trends in export markets. This enables project specialists to provide strategic analysis on key issues affecting growth and sustainability.

Improves the business environment

KHCP facilitates consultations among growers, processors, exporters, policy makers, and other stakeholders, on government policy, market infrastructure, input supply, and certification, and other issues that improve the horticulture sector.

How is the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project making a difference?

As of March 2012, KHCP has assisted a total of 68,028 rural households.

Results from the period of January 2012-March 2012 include:

- Yellow passion fruit farmers on the south Coast are now using improved management systems which have increased yields per vine by 100%.
- 1,500 farmers earned more than \$516,000 in sales of passion fruit.
- 62 metric tons of fresh mango were exported to the Middle East, generating Ksh 7.44 million (\$92,500) in sales for 400 smallholder farmers.
- More than 3,100 families in lower Eastern now have access to irrigation water for the first time, following the establishment of 63 water harvesting ponds which

use simple manual pumps to supply a low-pressure drip system.

- A total of 21,000 metric tons of sweet potato provided \$5 million worth of sales to Nyanza farmers. Average yields in Kabondo increased from 8 MT per hectare to 13 MT per hectare thanks to new crop management techniques.
- A pilot credit facility was approved by Equity Bank to help 40 smallholder growers in Nyeri and Kiambu counties to increase the quality and quantity of their flowers. The credit facility will help farmers access improved technologies such as shade nets, drip irrigation systems, soil analysis, improved varieties, and other farm inputs.

What key challenges does the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project face?

Each crop presents its own unique challenges. For example, erratic rainfall and an outbreak of caterpillars and aphids in January have been major recent challenges to pulse farmers. But the combination of 15 variety demonstration sites, 20 field days and 7,918 technical assistance trainings have improved the adoption rate of new pigeon pea varieties from the 2009 baseline of 34% up to 48% in 2012.

The lack of rain in the Coast region resulted in a sweet potato crop failure in the core area of Shimba Hills. A current pilot rainwater harvesting technology will inform the options for scaling up water storage resources in response to increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns.

The Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project in Action

Farmers in Kiambogo Village, Nyeri County face a number environmental challenges, including soil erosion, deforestation, charcoal burning, water mismanagement, and erratic rainfall. These issues limit agricultural productivity, food security, and income.

KHCP is working to reduce these trends by teaching farmers simple Natural Resource Management techniques that not only help conserve the environment, but also help improve their incomes. The program provides technical assistance to Wilmar Agro, a major flower exporter, which in turn, trains smallholders in natural resource management and sustainable farming.

William Mugo, a 24-year-old smallholder farmer who grows flowers for export in Kiambogo Village, started receiving training from Wilmar Agro in 2011. He

quickly adopted several techniques, such as water harvesting to control water usage and proper soil preparation to prevent erosion. These allowed him to save money on resources while increasing production. By the end of the year, he had sold KSh 100,000 (\$1,250) worth of flowers from just a quarter acre of land. He's now using his profits to further increase his income by diversifying into onions, Irish potatoes, and local market vegetables. In addition, he is able to support his family and educate his siblings.

Photo: Fintrac, Inc.



William Mugo is caring for the environment and increasing his income at the same time

William says "Having been jobless for close to seven years after dropping out of school for lack of school fees, I am glad that I can have a good income and be happily self-employed by simply planting flowers and conserving the environment."

For more information:

www.growkenya.org

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